

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

230901Z Sep 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TAIPEI 003944

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ERIC  
BARBORIAK  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS,  
U.S. ARMS PROCUREMENTS

1. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taipei dailies centered their coverage September 23 on President Chen Shui-bian's invitation to Chinese President Hu Jintao for a dialogue; the Taiwan Ministry of National Defense' report that China has built a model of Taiwan's military airport in Guangdong Province; and local issues. The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" ran a banner headline on its front page that read: "Bian: Will Talk with Hu Without Any Conditions," while other Chinese-language newspapers ran similar reports in their inside pages. In terms of U.S. arms procurements, both the pro-independence "Liberty Times" and "Taiwan Daily" carried news stories on President Chen Shui-bian's meeting with former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and former Deputy

SIPDIS

Assistant Secretary of State Randy Schriver in Miami. The "Taiwan Daily" carried a news story on page three that was topped with the headline: "Armitage: Taiwan Needs to Do Something for Its Self-Defense."

Several newspapers carried in their inside pages articles on U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's speech in New York September 21 regarding future Washington-Beijing relations. The report in the pro-unification "United Daily News" was topped with the headline: "Zoellick: U.S.-China Relations Re-Defined," while that of the centrist "China Times" was headlined: "Zoellick Urges China to Move Toward Democracy." The pro-independence "Liberty Times," however, reported the news story with the more comprehensive headline: "United States Urges China to Democratize and Not Just Think of Expanding [Its] Weaponry and Becoming a Hegemonic Power."

2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial questioned President Chen's proposal to meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao without any pre-conditions. The article called Chen's proposal an unsuccessful publicity strategy that might "sell out" Taiwan. Washington correspondent Vincent Chang commented on Zoellick's speech in a news analysis in the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News," saying it is of great significance for the United States to treat China as a "responsible stakeholder" rather than as a mere competitor. A "China Times" editorial discussed Taiwan's U.S. arms procurement bill, urging Taiwan to think twice and not to block the bill any more. End summary.

#### 1. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

A) "What [Is Taiwan] to Talk about if It Holds a Meeting with China with No Pre-conditions?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (9/23):

". The purpose of President Chen choosing to release such a reconciliation signal [to China] during his transit in the United States is to tell the international community that Taiwan is a peace-seeker rather than a troublemaker, and thereby obliterate China's attempts to smear Taiwan, and clear up misunderstandings in the international community. Even though Chen shows good intentions and motives in doing so, his proposal to meet with Hu is really unnecessary. It can not only fail to mitigate tensions across the Taiwan Strait, but will also create more trouble for Taiwan. . Chen's proposal is in substance a strategy for international publicity. Unfortunately, it is not a successful one. ..

"In a nutshell, if Taiwan is to sit at a negotiation table [with China], there must be conditions set beforehand, and the meeting must be held in a third country, so that both sides can make sure they are

standing on an equal footing. That way Taiwan can demonstrate to the international community that it is an independent sovereign state. Given the fact that China is deploying more than 700 missiles aimed at Taiwan and has already enacted the Anti-Secession Law, what can President Chen and [Chinese President] Hu Jintao talk about? For Taiwan people, a dialogue [with China] `that is not confined to a specific time period or location and that has no pre-conditions' is like selling out the island. It would be better that leaders of both sides of the Taiwan Strait not to meet this way."

B) "From Either You Lose or I Lose to Both Being Bankers"

Washington correspondent Vincent Chang said in a news analysis in the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] (9/23):

"The Bush administration, after having reviewed its China policy for some time, and given the fact that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has taken control

SIPDIS

of Washington's foreign policy, has more or less settled its direction on `cautiously expanding interaction with Beijing.' During a meeting at the National Committee on United States-China Relations September 21, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, via a speech that [claims to have] touched upon all aspects of Washington-Beijing relations, has concretely and clearly unveiled the United States objective understanding of `where should China go.' "It is noteworthy that in his speech, Zoellick more than once pointed out that Beijing should go beyond its current role of `just a member' to further become a `responsible stakeholder,' in an attempt to re-define the future Beijing-Washington ties. . The United States is willing to treat China as a stakeholder that shares, in a wider sense, equal responsibility in handling the `greater picture' of international affairs rather than a competitor in a narrow sense. Such a stride [by the United States] is of great significance. .

"The Bush administration shows clearly its hope to attempt to shape a whole new Washington-Beijing relationship, but other than talking about certain concepts, Zoellick did not mention any concrete implementation guidelines in his speech. . If such a policy remains on the level of being a concept [without real implementation], will it vanish eventually like the Clinton administration's hope to develop `a constructive strategic partnership' with Beijing?

"In addition, how the Bush administration, which honors the U.S. national interests, will persuade a rising superpower to accept the United States' one-way logic of expecting a `responsible stakeholder' to undergo `political transformation' is the key to test this new policy, and it remains to be seen what will finally come out of it."

## 12. U.S. Arms Procurements

A) "Think Twice on the [U.S.] Arms Procurements to Prevent Losing in Every Aspect"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (9/23):

". The U.S. official's harsh criticism has, as expected, triggered various reactions from people of different positions. . This newspaper believes that no matter judged from the perspectives of law, Taiwan's national interests or the political interests of the opposition parties, the boycotts by opposition caucuses in the Legislative Yuan to block the arms procurement bill from being reviewed by the Procedure Committee is an unwise strategy that can hardly sustain. .

"The argument over whether the arms procurement bill should be reviewed must be weighed from the angles of Taiwan's overall national interests and the real situation the island is in. In terms of Taiwan's overall national interests, people naturally hope that at the current stage, the island can maintain the status quo of not being annexed by Beijing. But the goal to maintain the status quo cannot be achieved effortlessly. The real situation is that over the past few years, Beijing has not only risen rapidly in terms of its overall national strength, but the advancement of its defense capabilities has also been really amazing. In the face of the threat formed under such circumstances, Taiwan also needs to appropriately upgrade its strength even just to maintain the status

quo . Another fact in the international community is that if we look around the globe, the United States is the only country that is able and dares to provide Taiwan with sufficient armaments so that it can [create a] counterbalance to Beijing. Even though the arms procurement bill may be interpreted as Taiwan paying protection money to the United States or as a move to benefit American arms dealers, it cannot change the fact that if Taiwan really turns down the U.S. arms procurements, it will have to run the dual risk of an imbalance of power across the Taiwan Strait accelerating and the possibility that the United States might adjust or give up [its plan to] help defend Taiwan. ."

KEEGAN